

Childhood imagination keeps memories of the Walking Man alive

By Janet Archer

In response to receiving copies of various newspaper cuttings, Andrew Hunt wrote to the Reepham Archive describing his childhood experiences:

"I had thought about the Walking Man on and off over the years and on a recent visit to Norfolk I tried to locate the exact place where he used to be – there was nothing.

"When I tried to describe to my family about this strange and, quite honestly, eerie figure that would appear in the headlights of my father's car on dark nights many, many years ago, I think they believed I had swapped reality for the plot of a Hammer House of Horror production.

"I was terrified of the Walking Man and avoided looking at him at all costs, but I was a very young child at the time.

"My grandparents who lived in Reepham had both passed away by the end of the seventies and I never really visited the town again.

"I began to wonder if I'd made the whole thing up too, but my friend Mark Davies reassured me I (probably) hadn't and that local landmarks come and go at a fairly regular rate and kindly took it upon himself to contact the Reepham Archive to answer the question that had been bugging me for decades.

"I was delighted when Mark contacted me with all the information about Mr Lain and the story surrounding the statue. I was so happy to finally put this to rest.

"I must confess I'm still a bit unnerved by the Walking Man, but at least, thanks to [the Archive], I know all the facts.

"My daughter, too, is fascinated with this story and plans to feature an image of the Walking Man in an art installation as part of her degree course.

"I wanted to share all this and hopefully let Mr Lain's family know that my overactive childhood imagination has kept the Walking Man alive and that he will be walking on for perhaps a little longer too."



William Lain pictured in March 1972 with his statue outside his workshop in Norwich Road, Reepham. Photo: EDP